



July 15, 2022

Ambassador Hammer
US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa
Department of State

Dear Ambassador Hammer,

Amnesty International USA congratulates you on your appointment as the new Envoy for the Horn of Africa at a critical time for the conflict in Ethiopia. Amnesty International believes that the humanitarian truce declared in March has been a [positive](#) step towards meeting the needs of millions of people trapped in conflict in Tigray, however, many challenges remain to bring justice and accountability to Ethiopia. Furthermore, while the increase in delivery of humanitarian aid to Tigray is a positive step, humanitarian access should not be used as a political tool and the resumption of humanitarian access should not be rewarded, as it is an obligation under humanitarian law to facilitate humanitarian access.

Amnesty International has documented serious crimes committed by all parties to the conflict including Tigrayan forces attacking civilians in [Amhara](#); the arbitrary detention of [Tigrayans](#) in Addis by the Government of Ethiopia; and most recently crimes committed by Amhara forces that amount to [ethnic cleansing](#) in Western Tigray. Despite improvements in the number of humanitarian convoys passing to Tigray, and commitment to a ceasefire that reduces risk of harms to civilians, crimes continue to be committed including ongoing arbitrary detention in Western Tigray as well as crimes under international law and other human rights violations against civilians in other parts of Ethiopia including the massacre of civilians in Oromia.

While it is understandable that one of your top priorities in your new position will be to move dialogue forward between all parties in Ethiopia, Amnesty International urges you to focus on the human rights situation more broadly and prioritize justice and accountability as a key pillar of the peace process. A culture of impunity for past atrocity crimes has contributed to the current conflict and if left unaddressed will only make the situation more precarious.

Therefore, we urge you to push the Government of Ethiopia to:

- Fully cooperate with the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, including granting unconditional access to the country to undertake human rights investigations;
- Ensure all alleged perpetrators of serious crimes committed in the context of the conflict, from all sides of the conflict, are investigated and prosecuted in fair trials;
- Suspend all members of the defense and security forces or public officials allegedly implicated in the commission of such crimes, until independent and impartial investigations are carried out;
- Give clear numbers of people detained due to suspected ties to the TPLF and OLA; ensure that they have access to lawyers and can be brought to fair trial in a reasonable time or released. While in detention make sure they are being treated humanely, and provided adequate food, water, healthcare, and contact with families;
- Grant access to humanitarian and human rights organizations including the ICRC to detention facilities, especially in Western Tigray, Afar and Oromia;
- Resume telecom and banking services to Tigray; and
- Secure the release of all those arbitrarily detained.

Amnesty International looks forward to being of further assistance as you begin your new role and we are happy to brief you further on our reporting and recommendations.